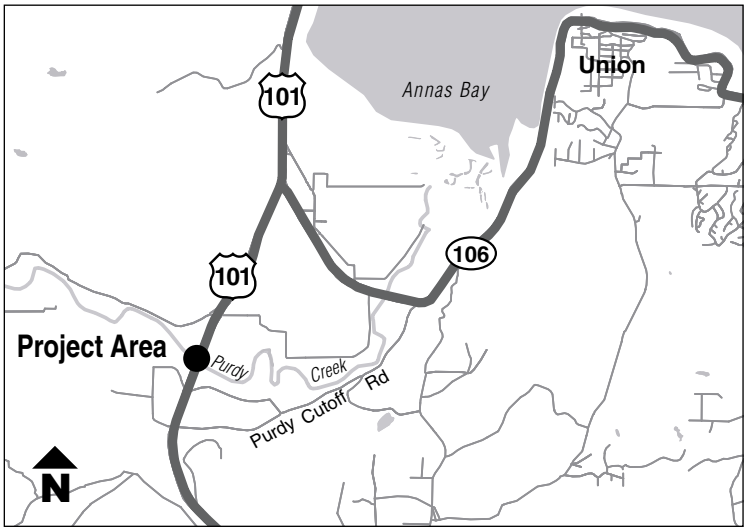
Washington State Department of Transportation

Purdy Creek Bridge News

Summer 2005

Skokomish River Valley Vicinity



US 101 Purdy Creek Bridge Replacement Project Update

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is preparing to replace the US 101 Purdy Creek Bridge in the Skokomish River Valley in Mason County.

The Purdy Creek Bridge site is the lowest point of US 101 in the Skokomish River Valley and the current bridge opening is inadequate to allow floodwaters to pass beneath the roadway. As a result, floods frequently cause the closure of US 101 and cause damage to the existing bridge.

The lower Skokomish River basin has been the subject of numerous studies undertaken by Mason County, Tacoma City Light, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), United States Geologic Survey, the Skokomish Indian Tribe, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. These studies recommend several improvements throughout the Skokomish River Valley. Replacing Purdy Creek Bridge with a raised roadway and a longer span is one recommended improvement.

WSDOT is developing plans for a replacement bridge. As part of this work, you may have recently seen survey crews collecting data along US 101 between Skokomish Valley Road (Purdy Cutoff Road) and Bourgault Road, as well as gathering information about the Purdy Creek channel. Crews may also be in the area this summer obtaining additional physical data.

Skokomish River Valley residents, and other interested parties, will be kept informed of the project progress through periodic newsletters, open houses, and web page updates. The project will also involve several government entities that include, among others, the Mason Conservation District, Mason County, and the Skokomish Tribe.

More About the Project

The US 101 bridge over Purdy Creek was originally constructed in 1932. The bridge was lengthened in the early 1940's and in 1995 emergency repairs were made because the creek was washing away the soil around the bridge footings. The timber trestle is at risk of further damage due to future flood events in the Skokomish River Valley.

This project was identified in the *1997 Skokomish River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan* prepared by Mason County, and studied further in the *1999 Skokomish River Emergency Purdy Creek Bridge (No. 101/420) Replacement Hydraulic Study* prepared by WSDOT. In 2004, the Legislature tasked WSDOT to construct a raised US 101 roadway and replacement bridge with a sufficient opening to allow floodwaters to pass under the bridge and to allow the highway to remain open to traffic during flood events.

A hydraulic analysis, which predicts how the floodwaters might impact the bridge structure, was performed in 1999 that recommended replacing the existing timber trestle bridge with a 460-foot concrete bridge. This analysis also proposed raising the existing roadway profile approximately 11 feet along this section of US 101. The analysis is being updated with more current survey and stream flow information, and will be completed this summer. At that time, the design of the new bridge will begin.

Washington State
Department of Transportation
Tumwater Design Office
P.O. Box 47446
Olympia, WA 98504-7446

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What's Inside?

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For More Information, contact:

Steve Fuchs
P.O. Box 47446
Olympia, WA 98504-7446
Telephone: (360) 570-6602 or toll-free (888) 323-7732
e-mail: fuchss@wsdot.wa.gov

Project information is available online at:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/us101purdycreek/

Project Features

Safety
The new bridge and roadway will result in less closures due to flooding of US 101, which will improve safety to the traveling public. The bridge also will be built to modern design standards with wider lanes and shoulders.

Highway System Upgrade
The existing bridge is an old timber trestle that requires frequent maintenance and repairs. The new bridge will provide more than 50 years of service to the highway system.

Reduced Risk for Catastrophic Bridge Failure
The portion of US 101 over Purdy Creek has had numerous closures due to floodwaters overtopping the roadway and subsequent repairs due to pavement washouts and bridge scour related damages (when creek flows wash away the soil around the bridge footings).

Project Schedule

Design work for the replacement bridge began in April 2005. The first steps will be to complete an analysis of the existing creek and flood plain in order to determine the length and height of the new bridge. Upon completion of this work, the design of the new bridge will begin.

A public open house will be held in the fall of 2005 to present preliminary plans along with environmental impacts and mitigation.

Construction is expected to begin in early 2008 and be completed in the fall of 2009.

Project Funding

The estimated cost of this project is $11.1 million.